



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 09/14/2004**

### **THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2004**

**Present:** Paul Schlichtman, Chair  
Jeff Thielman, Vice Chair  
Martin Thrope, Secretary  
Barbara Goodman  
Joani LaMachia  
Suzanne Owayda  
Sue Sheffler

Superintendent: Kay Donovan  
CFO: Rob Addelson  
Asst. Supt. Joanne Gurry

**Absent:** Sp. Ed. Director Marilyn Bisbicos

Call to order: 7:35

Chairman Paul Schlichtman called the meeting to order noting that Comcast was experiencing technical difficulties with the audio portion of the broadcast.

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

#### **NEW STAFF**

Superintendent Donovan reviewed the list of newly hired staff. Mrs. Donovan noted that it is the largest hiring of new staff since her tenure largely due to retirements and the restoration of funds. The Superintendent also pointed out that since school started three days ago 85 new students have enrolled at Arlington High School and confirmed that it is impacting class size.

Mrs. Donovan will invite the new administrators to the next meeting to meet the school committee.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH**

##### **Future Management Systems**

Ms. Owayda stated that the superintendent search subcommittee met with Lyle Kirtman a few times over the summer but that this is the first time he will address the full committee to give an update on the process.

Mr. Kirtman updated the School Committee on the search process and reviewed the packet covering the following topics:

**Search Steps and Timelines** were reviewed –with some scheduling conflicts noted in January.

Mr. Thielman noted conflicts on January 12-14 and January 19<sup>th</sup> 4-7pm; Mr. Thrope noted a possible conflict January 18-25. Mr. Kirtman did emphasize the importance of all members being present during the interview process and will schedule interviews accordingly.

**Search Committee Membership** – Mr. Kirtman stated that the usual make up of a search committee consists of teachers, school committee members, parents, community, administrators, town officials, police chief, and fire chief. Maintaining confidentiality is essential until the point that the process is public.

Mr. Thrope questioned if having a member of the school committee on the search committee is required, mandatory, or guarantees a quality search. Mr. Thrope was against having a school committee member serving on the search committee noting that no one member can adequately represent the whole committee. In terms of the make up of the committee Lyle stated that most searches do have school committee members on the search committee with sometimes up to 3-4 members serving.

Ms. Owayda pointed out that the topic was addressed with Mr. Kirtman during a subcommittee meeting where Mr. Kirtman did believe that having a member of the school committee on a search is a good thing. It provides a broad range of perspectives and can help bring about a positive transition from search candidate to finalist in terms of the knowledge a member brings to the full committee relative to background experience.

Mr. Schlichtman questioned how many searches FMS has conducted without school committee representation, if this is an accepted practice and if there are any ethical reasons or issues of integrity in doing so.

Mr. Kirtman reported that only one other search over the past ten years did not have school committee representation on a search committee.

**Recruitment Strategy - Diversity-** Mr. Kirtman explained that recruitment of candidates of color could be problematic due to the lack of superintendent experience, candidates are more like to have experience as principals or in central administration. Committee members noted that superintendent experience was not part of the job description and are open to all qualified candidates.

**Brochure** – FMS made amendments and corrections as recommended by the Committee and discussed voting on the salary range on the brochure

Committee Members discussed the reality of the \$130,000 - \$150,000 salary range; Mr. Kirtman did inquire that if a potential candidate is currently making \$150,000 would the committee be open to negotiating up to 160,000.00. Mr. Schlichtman polled the committee on what their preference would be on the salary range with the consensus at \$130,000 - \$150,000 range, but with FMS aware that the school committee would be willing to negotiate higher with the right candidate.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously Voted to direct FMS to advertise the superintendent posting with the salary to be in the \$130,000.00 to the \$150,000.00 range, commensurate with experience, plus fringe benefits.

**Focus Groups** – Suzanne Owayda reviewed the focus group announcement currently scheduled for Wednesday, September 29<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup>. The announcement will be widely distributed to staff and students, on school parent elists, the school web site, to Town Meeting Members on September 20<sup>th</sup>, and in the Arlington Advocate. Mr. Kirtman generally recommends that school committee members do not attend the focus groups.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously Voted approval of the focus group announcement and schedule, to begin advertising and dissemination on September 15, 2004.

**Advertisement and Advertising Sources** – Mr. Kirtman reviewed the listing of the various advertising sources noting the key ad in Education Week in the September 29<sup>th</sup> issue. Mr. Kirtman recommended using the New York Times versus of The Boston Globe; explaining that for the money the New York Times provides a national profile.

Ms. Owayda reviewed the revised motion on the selection for the Leadership Profile and Superintendent Selection Committees (attached)

Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. LaMachia made a motion for approval.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Thielman it was Moved to strike the last bullet and the last sentence from bullet number seven.

Roll Call 2 yes (Mr. Thrope and Mr. Thielman voted yes)– 5 no (Ms. Goodman, Ms. LaMachia, Ms. Owayda, Ms. Sheffler, Mr. Schlichtman) motion fails Mr. Thrope stated that no single member can adequately represent the views of the entire Committee. Mr. Thielman supports the amendment and appreciates the changes made by Ms. Owayda on the selection committee but supports Mr. Thrope's views that the integrity of the process is better protected with no school committee member serving on the selection committee.

Ms. Goodman pointed out that 1 parent, 1 teacher, or 1 administrator can not represent everyone in that particular group but stressed that each person/group provides a valuable perspective. Ms. Owayda, Ms. Sheffler and Ms. LaMachia supported Ms. Goodman's view and reiterated the need for a diverse selection committee and how different perspectives add to the process.

Mr. Schlichtman explained that the law states that the responsibility of hiring and evaluating a superintendent rests solely on the seven members school committee -. Mr. Schlichtman pointed out that if a candidate was presented that evening and had four votes from the committee they could hire that candidate on the spot. However the School Committee recognizes the value and importance of an open process with the community. It is important not to abdicate responsibility and the School Committee should not divorce itself from the process as elected members. Any member of the committee can be trusted and has the integrity to bring forth the majority opinion and consensus of the committee.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Thielman

Moved to strike bullet 3 & 4 to remove the nominating process in the selection process

Roll Call: 2 yes – 5 no, motion defeated (Mr. Thrope & Mr. Schlichtman vote in favor of the motion)

(Ms. Goodman, Ms. LaMachia, Ms. Owayda, Ms. Sheffler, Mr. Thielman vote against the motion).

On Ms. Owayda's original motion seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously

Voted to approve the selection process for the Leadership Profile and Superintendent Selection Committees.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

#### **Opening of School**

Supt. Donovan reported that the first day of school opened smoothly.

All Dallin students transitioned to their new schools.

Kindergarten enrollment is up from 400 to 424 students

85 students have enrolled at AHS since the beginning of school, some of these students were previously planning on attending Minuteman Regional or private schools as well as a few move ins. Ms. Goodman requested a report on class size.

Supt. & CFO will meet with Fish Developers to look at the impact of the proposed Symmes project on the schools. The current estimate is approximately 40 students grades K-12; Mrs. Donovan pointed out that this would have an impact on the redistricting issue.

Circuit Breaker – additional money will be forthcoming this year, some of the money will be returned to the Town to offset salary increases.

Special Education Reimbursement – the State will not reimburse communities on payments made in FY05 until FY06.

Initial MCAS scores have been received, results will be forthcoming.

A delegation from Japan will be visiting Arlington next month and will be observing at the Ottoson Middle School and touring at Arlington High School

APS will be part of a Coordinated Review by the State beginning in January

SBAB has issued new rules; Supt. Donovan will set up an Infrastructure Committee Meeting for review

#### **Calendar change**

Supt. Donovan requested that the professional development day currently scheduled for Wednesday, October 27, 2004 be rescheduled for Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup>. The change is agreeable with the Arlington Education Association.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously

Voted to approve the change in the professional development from Wednesday, October 27, 2004 to Monday, November 1, 2004.

#### **Peirce Field Update**

CFO Rob Addelson gave an update on the Peirce Field. Mr. Addelson reported that starting in July the crews worked weekends to keep on schedule, as a result there were a number of complaints from neighbors relative to noise levels and health/air quality concerns. The contractors did meet with neighbors to hear their concerns and explain that the goal of the contractor was to complete several on-going activities prior to the start of school. Activities to date include:

Removal and installation of the new culvert

Excavation of chromium impacted soils in various areas across the site

Installation of two new natural gas pipelines around the soccer field

Excavation of clean utility corridors and new utilities in Mill Brook Drive parking lot and behind the high school building

Continuous air monitoring throughout the project

Mr. Addelson noted that weather permitting the artificial turf would be in place and the grass down before the winter.

Relative to the wish list for Pierce Field Mr. Addelson reported that the bids received exceed the estimates.

#### **Dallin Update**

Supt. Donovan and CFO Rob Addelson reported on the Dallin School construction. The school move took place after the end of school, demolition of the building started after July 12<sup>th</sup> and three quarters of the building is down. The PTBC hired a project manager to oversee the construction and it is currently on schedule.

#### **AHS Student Handbook**

Mrs. Donovan requested approval of the AHS student handbook. The Superintendent stated that she was aware that the committee did not have the opportunity to review and approve the changes but explained that in order to have the books ready Mr. Skidmore needed to print them over the summer. Supt. Donovan emphasized that in the future any changes would be brought before the Committee for approval.

Mr. Skidmore answered questions from the Committee, with members supportive of the changes.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously  
Voted to approve the recommended changes in the AHS student handbook as presented by AHS principal Charles Skidmore.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Budget**

Mr. Thielman reported that the budget subcommittee met over the summer relative to the budget process, received input from Kay, Rob, and Joanne, and developed a budget planning process. The Budget Subcommittee approved the following **Budget Planning Process for 2004-05 School Year** (attached) and Mr. Thielman outlined the proposed process and procedures and requested approval from the full committee.

The Committee was in favor of the proposal and appreciative of the goal to align the district goals with the budget in the multi year budget plan. There was concern that the process and timeline may be ambitious in December and January considering all the meetings and possible interviews in the superintendent search. The Chair noted that his approval is contingent on the understanding of concerns relative to time constraints.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously  
Voted to adopt the **Arlington School Committee Budget Planning Process for the 2004-2005 year.**

### **Policy & Procedures**

Mr. Thrope reported that part of creating a yearly calendar earmarking policies needing to be addressed in a time specific the following policies were identified:

Policy CBI Requiring/identifying Supt. Goals due September

Policy DI require a financial report by Sept 30<sup>th</sup>

Policy GBAA - Minority hiring report due Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>

**Policy CBI & CBI-E** - Mr. Thrope presented the changes proposed on policy CBI & CBI-E Evaluation of the Superintendent and the evaluation instrument. Changes include reducing the evaluation to one page with one rating for each of the categories included in the current instrument as well as the addition of the first sentence in the last paragraph. Mr. Thrope stated that this was a draft only and requested feedback from committee members by the next subcommittee meeting. For clarity Mr. Thrope will present the proposed differences with the existing policy. Supt. Donovan was supportive of the proposed changes in the policy and recommended that the chair of the school committee sit with the new superintendent to discuss each ones expectations.

**Policy BAA Self Evaluation** – Mr. Thrope reported that the subcommittee discussed the workshop and identified that improvements could be made as follows:

- There is no test of the validity of the group norms
- Time in the session for next steps, none were identified
- Consensus improvement issues need to be isolated

Both Ms. Goodman and Mr. Schlichtman expressed confusion on the proposed motion and which subcommittee would address the issues. Mr. Thielman clarified that the motion only directs the chair to review the results of the meeting and decide what actions to take, if any.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Thielman it was  
Voted to recommend that the chair assign consensus identified areas for improvement on the self evaluation to the appropriate subcommittees. 6-0-1 abstention by Ms. Sheffler

Mr. Thrope reported that as a result of the summer meeting not being posted the subcommittee reviewed the Committee's and administrative secretary's duties and responsibilities in postings, note taking and minutes preparation and presented the following policy changes for a 1<sup>st</sup> reading

**Policy BDB School Committee Officers** proposed change in #1 to add **or cause to be signed when permissible**, it also adds the following under Secretary duties:

The secretary will perform or cause to be performed the following:

- ✓ Keep an accurate journal of all committee meetings.
- ✓ Comply with state law and committee policy regarding notification of meetings
- ✓ Render such reports as may be required by the state or the town.

Ms. Goodman requested definition on the last bullet pointing out that there is a possibility of a legal requirement and that the subcommittee needs to make explicit the delegation of any required reports.

**BDH School Committee Staff Assistants** - the addition of " with the chair monitoring and managing the workload." at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph and the addition of: During periods when the administrative secretary is on vacation the superintendent will arrange for a substitute. Ms. Owayda suggested changing the language of on vacation to not available noting that the position is a 10 month position.

Mr. Schlichtman requested a motion to move the 11:00 rule.  
Ms. Sheffler requested clarification on the time frame  
On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Thielman it was unanimously  
Voted to move the 11:00 rule for 15 minutes.

.. **Policy BDE School Committee Subcommittees** - proposed the addition of the last sentence in #7 In addition the subcommittee chairs will coordinate with the administrative secretary to ensure that meetings are posted and that arrangements are made for note taking and minutes preparation. Mr. Thrope clarified that coordinate is a discussion and does not set an expectation that the administrative secretary will attend/be available at every subcommittee meeting

Ms. Sheffler requested that the chair identity items that need to be addressed or action to be taken during tonight's meeting and to table the remaining agenda items until the next meeting.  
Ms. Sheffler seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously  
Voted to table the discussions under policies and procedures subcommittee report.

## **COMMITTEE VOTES**

### .. **Warrant Approval**

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was unanimously  
Voted to approve warrant # 05024 in the amount of \$212,958.52

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was unanimously  
Voted to approve warrant #05033 in the amount of \$209,415.39

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was unanimously  
Voted to approve warrant #05018 in the amount of \$498,133.01

### .. **Revote August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting**

The Chair requested a motion to reaffirm all votes taken at the August 3, 2004 school committee meeting relative to the Superintendent Search and approved warrants.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was unanimously  
Voted to reaffirm all votes taken by the School Committee at its August 3, 2004 meeting.

### .. **Designation of Legal Counsel**

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was unanimously  
Voted to reappoint Stoneman, Chandler & Miller as the school committees' legal counsel for 3 years as presented in their contract. .

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### .. **Special Dedication of School Facility**

Supt. Donovan presented a request to rename AHS House B to Collomb House in memory of former house dean Richard Collomb. Mrs. Donovan explained that Dick Collomb was an APS employee from 1967 through August 1996 the time of his death. He started out in the business department, served as assistant house dean and then house dean earning respect from both staff and students.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously  
Voted to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to rename House B to Collomb House in recognition of Richard Collomb (former house dean).

On a motion by Ms. Sheffler seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was  
Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of contract negotiation and a legal issue with no further business to be conducted upon the return to open session except to adjourn. Roll Call: Unanimous

Executive Session 11:15 – 11:21 PM

On a motion by Ms. Sheffler and seconded it was unanimously  
Voted to adjourn at 11:21 PM]

Submitted by  
Karen Tassone  
Committee Secretary